

Young violinist impresses Sisters audience

By Jim Anderson
Correspondent

Sunday afternoon a musical event took place in the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration that was truly remarkable. Ten-year-old Nicolas Oncken, violinist, and his accompanist, Stephanie King, played together in a recital that audience members thought worthy of Carnegie Hall.

Thanks to the friendship that exists between Nicolas's mom, Ikako, and Sharlene Weed of Sisters Habitat for Humanity, the idea for Habitat to sponsor the recital became reality with the proceeds going toward a Habitat home that's being built for the Brinkman family of Sisters.

Nicolas Oncken has been studying the violin since he was 4. He is currently working with Professor Kara Eubanks of the Willamette Violin Academy in Eugene. King teaches piano and is the musical director of the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration in Sisters.

Oncken's first piece was a Concert Grosso in F Major, Op. 6 No. 9 by A. Corelli, and this is what Nicolas had to say about it: "Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) wrote this for string orchestra around 1712, about a year before he died. I will be playing the third movement, the Courante, which literally means running, and in later years it as danced with fast running and jumping steps. I enjoy this Courante for its movement and melody. It echoes through the room when I'm playing it, a sound that fills my home with warmth."

The church was also filled with that warmth as he and Stephanie played, and all the while the audience was captivated by the balanced and beautiful sounds of piano and violin.

There were four planned pieces on the program: the "Third Movement from a Violin Sonata in D Major," by Corelli; "Sonata in A Major," by G.F. Handel; "Cello Suite

No. 1 in G Major," by Bach; and "Concert in A Minor" by J.S. Bach — all of which were delightfully described by Nicolas and played without flaw. The fourth piece, "Sonata in A Major," by G. F. Handel was unaccompanied.

And then came the encores, played to a standing ovation.

Stephanie King had this to say about her violin partner: "Nicolas is a pleasure to work with. He is mature beyond his years, in his commitment to excellence, his poise, and his musicality and expressiveness as a musician. It is usually very tricky for kids to understand how to work with a pianist; however, Nicolas and I were right in sync. I look forward to future musical endeavors together."

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The Oncken home is filled with music, especially violins. Nicolas' brother Ezra doesn't need to be coaxed to pick up his violin and play a duet with his older brother every moment he can. Together, they make for happy and sweet music for the entire family home.

"It is fun and helpful because instead of watching someone else play and wait your turn, I get to play at the same time and learn," Ezra said. "It's so nice to play with him because I get to have a companion to play with and look up to. I really enjoy it a lot. He is my big buddy and he teaches me a lot by what he does."

Their mom, Akiko, revels in the talents of her two boys, and offers this small glimpse into their family life: "Watching my sons play the



PHOTO PROVIDED

Nicolas Oncken, violinist extraordinaire, and his talented piano accompanist, Stephanie King.

violin, and assisting them in their practice, have allowed me the opportunity to get to know their personality, learning style, and incredible depth that each one of them brings out as they express intense emotions, stories and ideas through music.

"Thanks to wonderful teachers that have guided me as a parent coach at home, I feel lucky that it has allowed me to develop an intimate relationship with my sons. It is an incredible treat for me as

a classical music lover. I have learned so much about how a human being develops habits (good and bad), how our brain works to integrate new information."

"Playing violin is a fun and interesting skill," said Nicolas. "It is exhilarating to play violin, and with good practice, I get to meet amazing teachers and artists that teach me technique and tone as well as give me advice. And then, in performances, I get to share what I have learned with others."

Land damage during refuge takeover estimated at \$108K

PORTLAND (AP) — Federal authorities say it cost more than \$100,000 to repair two trenches and a road dug during the occupation of a federal wildlife refuge in Oregon last winter.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported Wednesday that Jake Ryan and Duane Ehmer are charged with depredation of government property for digging trenches on part of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge that's considered an archaeological site.

The FBI hired an expert to assess the area after the 41-day occupation to determine whether the damage violated the Archaeological Resources Protection Act.

Attorneys for Ryan and Ehmer say the pair hasn't been charged with violating the federal act because they didn't know the site had any archaeological significance. They've asked the court to prevent prosecutors from mentioning the repair costs to jurors during next month's trial. But prosecutors argue the repair costs are relevant to support the charges.

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